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Message Text

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67
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, RP
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MARCOS ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

1. DURING SPEECH TO UP LAW ALUMNI JAN 12 PRESIDENT MARCOS TOLD HIS AUDIENCE: "I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT IT IS MY INTENTION TO DRAW FROM THE SANGGUNIANG BAYAN AND THE PROCEESSES OF ELECTION OF THE DELEGATES OF THE SANGGUNIANG BAYAN THE CHOICE AND ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PHILIPPINES." MARCOS SAID HE COULD NOT PREDICT WHEN THIS WOULD HAPPEN BUT HOPED IT WOULD BE "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

2. PRESS DESCRIBES PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT AS "UNEXPECTED." ACCOUNT OF SPEECH AND INTERPRETATION OF REMARKS ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DIFFER IN EACH OF MORNING DAILIES, NONE OF WHICH CARRY TEXT. BULLETIN TODAY REPORTS IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN IF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MARCOS REFERRED TO IS IN FACT PARLIAMENT PROVIDED FOR IN NEW CONSITITUTION. AFTER CITING TRANSITORY PROVISIONS OF NEW CONSTITUTION GOVERNING ELECTION OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, BULLETIN REPORTS "CERTAIN LEGAL ADVISORS" MAINTAIN PRESIDENT HAS OPTION OF PROVIDING FOR MANNER OF ELECTION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. BULLETIN SPECULATES PRESIDENT MIGHT HAVE MEANT HE WOULD REPLACE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITH NATIONAL SANGGUNIANG BAYAN. IN ITS ACCOUNT, TIMES JOURNAL REPORTS PRESIDENT HAS
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DISCRETION IN DETERMINING MANNER OF ELECTING MEMBERS OF

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. DAILY EXPRESS' ACCOUNT IS MOST CIRCUM-
SPECT. EXPRESS INTERPRETS MARCOS AS MEANING SANGGUNIANG
BAYAN ARE POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FUTURE MEMBERS OF EITHER
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OR EVEN A LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL.

3. IN JAN 12 SPEECH PRESIDENT MADE STRONG DEFENSE OF
SANGGUNIANG BAYAN. HE CITED REFORMS HIS GOVERNMENT HAD
MADE DESPITE WORLD CRISES AND REITERATED NEED FOR
CENTRALIZED AUTHORITY IN TIME OF STRESS. HE SAID HE WAS
PREPARED TO SUBMIT HIMSLEF TO REFERENDUM WHENEVER PEOPLE
DEMANDED IT. FYI. AP ACCOUNT ACCURATELY NOTES HE TOLD
VISITING CHASE MANHATTAN BANKERS IN LATE 1974 HE WOULD
SCHEDULE REFERENDUM EACH JANUARY. END FYI.

4. RESPONSE TO PORTION OF MARCOS' SPEECH CONCERNING ASSEMBLY
SEEMED RATHER TEPID. PROGRAM IN WHICH PRESIDENT PARTICIPATED
BEGAN WITH LECTURE BY FORMER INTEGRATED BAR PRESIDENT REYES
WHO IS STRONG CRITIC OF MARCOS REGIME. UP STUDENTS PUB-
LISHED SPECIAL ISSUE OF COLLEGIAN FOR OCCASION STRONGLY
CRITICAL OF REGIME. ONE OF COLLEGIAN ARTICLES WAS LETTER
FROM EX-PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL TO PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT MANUEL LIM URGING CONVENING OF
INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO GET COUNTRY BACK ON CONSTITU-
TIONAL TRACK.

5. COMMENT: WE ASSUME REMARKS INTENDED TO KEEP ALIVE
IMAGE OF PRESIDENTIAL INTEREST IN HIS VERSION OF DEMOCRACY,
CLEARLY ONE NOT ANTICIPATED BY CONSTITUTION. AT SAME TIME
THEY MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO SUGGEST THAT ALL THE COMMO-
TION AND CONFUSION SURROUNDING THE CURRENT ORGANIZATION
OF THE SANGGUNIANG BAYANS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL REALLY HAS
PURPOSE AND NATIONAL IMPORT DESPITE APPEARANCES TO CONTRARY.
THIS IS SOMETHING THAT PROBABLY DOES REQUIRE SAYING VIEW
INCREDIBLE SPECTACLE OF SANGGUNIANG BAYAN "DEVELOPMENT"
OVER PAST FEW WEEKS. ALTHOUGH PRESS STRUGGLED TO MAKE SOME-
THING OUT OF PRESIDENT'S "HOPE" THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COULD
BE FORMED "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," WE DO NOT READ THOSE
REMARKS AS SUGGESTIVE OF ANY EARLY MOVE TOWARDS MARCOS
STYLE PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY ON NATIONAL LEVEL.
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